AN INQUIRY REGARDING THE INFLUENCE OF THE EXPANSION OF INTERNET NETWORKS UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Assist. Prof. **Antoniu Ovidiu BALINT** PhD Candidate
The Bucharest University of Economic Studies
6, Romana Sq, Sector 1, 010374, Bucharest, Romania
balint_antoniu_ovidiu@yahoo.com

Lecturer **Andrei Mihai CRISTEA** PhD Candidate
Hyperion University from Bucharest
169, Calarasilor Str., Sector 3, 030615, Bucharest, Romania
cristeaandm@yahoo.com

Assist. Prof. **Dan Gabriel CRISTEA** PhD Candidate
Hyperion University from Bucharest
169, Calarasilor Str., Sector 3, 030615, Bucharest, Romania
dancristea2@yahoo.com

Otilia Stefania BALINT MA Student
National School for Political Science and Public Administration
6-8, Povernei Str., Sector 1, 010644, Bucharest, Romania,
otilia.balint@gmail.com

Abstract

The implementation and expansion of internet networks around the world had a huge impact on the development of the social-welfare of citizens, where the attendance of internet networks are present, and especially on the development of the economic environment at a local, regional and national level. The paper presents an insight of how internet networks expand in different rates around the world but especially in the European Union (EU) by analyzing data available to the general public and interpreting different researches we conducted so far. The complex and dynamic approaches that involves studding the expansion of internet networks plays an important part on further developing new strategies on how to expand new networks at a global level and most importantly how to "standardize" all internet connections worldwide.

Key words: intelligent systems, social development, internet networks, economic environment

JEL Classification*:* D00, E00, F20, L86, M16, M21, O11, O12, O31

1. Introduction and literature review

As a consequence of differential economic development around the world, the implementation and expansion of new technologies are much higher in developed economic regions such as Eastern Asia, North America and Western Europe. Thus, the economic development in the field of implementation of new technologies leads to inequalities between rich regions and poor regions.

Due to the recent "birth" of this mean of communication and uncertainty on how the spread of the Internet affects individual or community life, sociological research in this area is less advanced, relative to other areas of social life [7]. Therefore, studies and analyses on the influence of Internet upon individual lives and the way in which the Internet alters both the social structure as well as the capacity of the local communities to understand the social participation of individuals in using the Internet networks are recent ant not relevant enough [1].

Around internet networks are built theories and perspectives that either emphasizes the positive aspects of the Internet and new technologies involving social life or they present the negative issues that involve using the Internet and new technologies.

In this sphere of social effects caused by the Internet networks, namely, the unequal diffusion of information technologies there shall be established the concept of technological and social division [3]. Far from being a unified conceptual and technological notion the inequalities that result from different geographical areas depend on the viewpoint of analyzing the phenomenon.

Today, the Internet represents a technological reality subsumed impetuous to the process of globalization, a force capable of intensifying the knowledge and communication environment on a planetary scale and most importantly it facilitates the interaction between people [5]. In addition, the Internet is becoming a more than a legal reality that its various users can no longer ignore. Whether we are talking about online the relationship between the virtual world that was created and the real problems that we are facing tends to become second nature [6].

Due to the fact that the Internet is a global, interactive, flexible, rich in resources, dynamic, generous information, relatively inexpensive compared with other means of mass communication; and that has opened up new channels of communication, collaboration, social networking, interaction and coordination between users, more and more Internet applications and services have been developed to support the operations and users needs, but also to make it accessible to a more diverse audience [2].

We can identify two distinct perspectives on how to approach the evolvement of the Internet networks, already established through studies and scientific theorizing: the Internet as a communication and information medium and the Internet as a medium of social expression [4]. The two dimensions achieved virtually complete characterization of this area, without being individually sufficient. Thus, what is important to note is that the informatization of everyday life is not reducible only to communication processes, but also the involvement of ICT in more and more activities in all areas of society (professional and domestic, public and private) is having a huge impact on the socio-economic environment.

2. The influence of Internet networks on the socio-economic environment

It is generally accepted by all the researcher in this field of study that the Internet, information and communication technologies were the key elements that have marked the evolution of the last two decades especially the last century, being as important for this millennium, which began as a fundamentally influenced global process of computerization of society by increasing complexity in the use of information technology (IT) and the exponential profile of IT.

The fact that the Internet network is global, interactive, flexible, rich in resources, dynamic and relatively inexpensive compared to other means of mass communication, collaboration, socialization, interaction and coordination between the users, more applications and internet services have been developed to support both users needs and actions, and to make it accessible to an diverse audience.

If the classification of the Internet media was done naturally, following the initial direction for which it was designed, the transformation of the Internet and social media wouldn't been as expansive as we know it today.

Beyond the approaches that we have enumerated previously, the social component of the Internet represents a reality that we are living now and obviously the communication processes is irreducible.

If the magnitude of the Internet networks expansion is currently widely accepted, does the same thing can be said about its importance? Both as a mean of communication (interpersonal and mass) but especially as a "world of people who communicate".

To understand the impact of the Internet on sociology, economics, geopolitics etc. we need to understand first the implications of the widely spared concept of "information society" as well as its implementations, definitions and theories.

The Web and especially Web-sites have become in a short time from their appearance a thriving business and, at the same time, an environment conducive to business development. But as in any environment, competition is becoming increasingly fierce, therefore, mere presence on the Internet is no longer enough to be known and appreciated. Web-sites can be simultaneously considered as products and in the same time commercial sites.

If we consider Web-sites as products and the end-users as costumers, the supply and demand operates the same as in the real world. Moreover the functions of the Internet networks adapts to the needs of everyone, going so far as to anticipating them. What is different from the real environment is that web-sites focus on the product itself, on its functioning and the appearance equally.

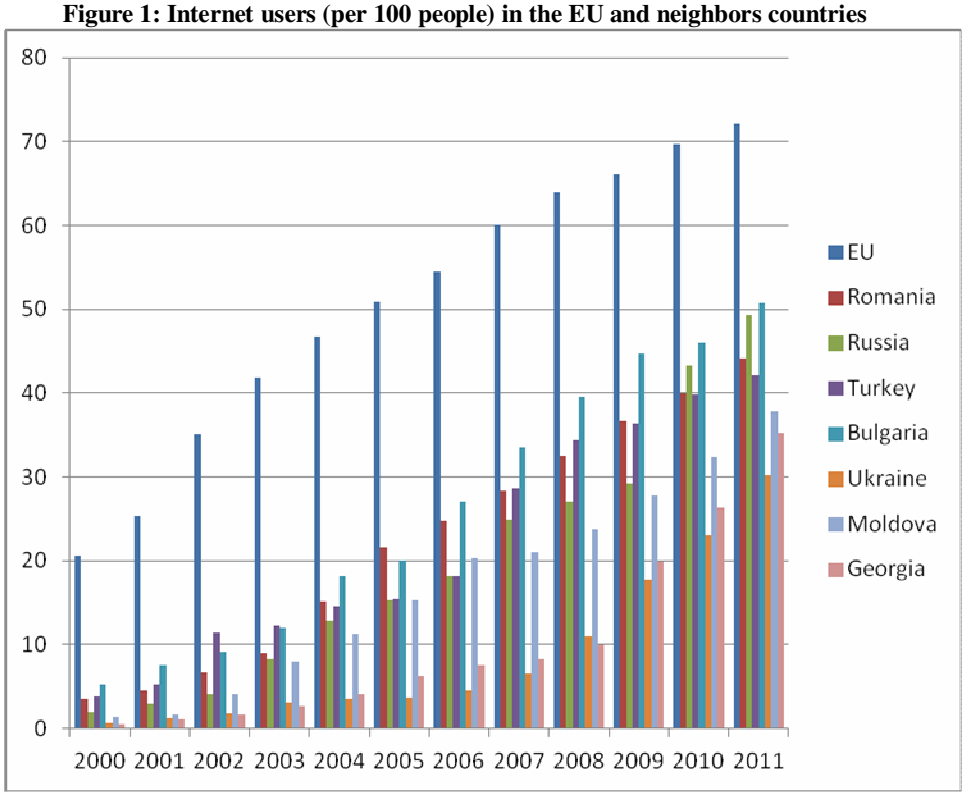
In conclusion it is important that, before delivering the final product to the end-users, to follow all stages of marketing and sales strategies where both the form and function of the product ensures the success of the transaction.

3. The access to Internet networks in the European Union (EU) and neighbors countries

In the last decades we have witnessed, in all areas that involve the economic environment, the need to improve the existing technologies and the emergence of new ones, as a result of the natural evolution of things. What

characterizes the internet networks now is represented by the fact that we perceive things in a different manner and obviously this shows the advantages and disadvantages on how people around the world interact with new technologies.
In the 1990s, with the magnitude of which internet networks began to evolve, it has started a new mode on how companies and clients interact, and the results obtained after the implementation of new technologies quantified the potential of information technology (IT) from three different angles:
1. ensuring socially fair distribution of advantages offered by technological progress;
2. improving the efficiency of the administration department from companies and, in general, in all departments;
3. ensuring the possibility of exercising the rights of participation and decision-making for all persons engaged in certain activities.

Figure 1: Internet users (per 100 people) in the EU and neighbors countries



Source: Original representation based on data provided by World Bank Indicators, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2

As we can see in figure no. 1 the number of internet users has been growing constantly in the last decade. According to the data offered by the World Bank Indicators the development of internet user is increasing year by year from a decade to another decade. Differences between countries are obviously (see fig. 1)

but the increase rate of internet user is developing in the same manner all over the EU and neighbor countries.
The difference between EU countries and other non EU countries are obvious and a preliminary conclusion is that the economic development is not equal all over the EU or other neighbor countries with a very good economic background (example Turkey).
As we correlate the preliminary results of this paper presented previously in our research with the historical background of the countries that we can find in figure no. 1 we can say that the importance of the communist architecture had an immense impact on the evolution of Internet networks. We affirm this because, after our studies, we believe that the expansion of a new internet network is done more easily in a ex-communist country rather in a western country due to the architecture of the houses that people live in. If we have 60 people living in an apartment building and if we had 60 people living in a complex of houses it is more easily to connect apartment building to the internet all in the same time rather than connecting all the houses separately at an internet network.
We consider that the internet networks will expand "their territory" in the next decades in an "explosive" manner due to the fast evolution of technology and especially to the expansion of wireless technologies.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Although it was always assumed that those using and benefiting from the latest breakthroughs in technology are capable people, there are other groups that may be as important and perhaps most important communication namely those with special needs with physical or sensory limitations.
The expansion of internet networks will be indubitable the promoter of new breakouts in technology and most importantly will boost the economic environment to a new level and we will be witnesses to a permanent changing of the socio-economic medium.
This paper does not claim to exhaust a topic that, in its basic dimensions - Sociology and the Internet networks, is extremely extended and placed in a permanent dynamic environment. It cannot - and does not have the possibility - to keep pace with innovations occurring at the present time. Perhaps some concepts and some very useful guidelines will be discovered and implemented by theorists and practitioners in the EU or in any other place in the world, in order to boost innovation.

Refrences

1. Attewell, P., 2001, *The First and Second Digital Divides*, „Sociology of Education", Vol. 74, pp. 252–259.
2. Balint A. O., Cristea A. M., Niculescu M. D., 2013, *The Applicability of the Behavioral Market Segmentation Theory in Transport Networks*, Ovidius University Annals – Economic Sciences Series, ISSN 1582-9383, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp.702-706.
3. Brewer A., Sloan N., Landers T.L., 1999, Intelligent tracking in manufacturing, *Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing,* Vol. 10, Issue 3-4, pp. 245-250.
4. Burghelea, C., 2012. "*Modelul dezvoltarii durabile"*, Theoretical and Applied Economics, Bucharest, pp. 96-107.
5. Cebotarean E., 2011, Business Intelligence, *Journal of Knowledge Management, Economics and Information Technology,* Vol. 1, Issus 2, pp. 2-12.
6. DiMaggio P., Hargittai E., Neuman W. R., Robinson J. P., 2001, *Social Implications of the Internet*, „Annual Review of Sociology", Vol. 27, pp. 307–336.
7. Morris J., 2007, *Bridging the Digital Divide: Internet Access in Central and Eastern Europe*, Center for democracy and technology.
8. *** World Bank Indicators,
9. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2 (acc. 29.04.2014).